FACULTY OF MUSIC
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

SUNDAY AFTERNOON SERIES

PIERRE SOUVAIRAN, PIANO
DAVID ZAFER, VIOLIN
VICTOR MARTIN, VIOLIN
KATHY WUNDER, VIOLA
VLADIMIR ORLOFF, CELLO

CONCERT HALL
EDWARD JOHNSON BUILDING

SUNDAY, JANUARY 14,1973
AT 3 P.M.

PROGRAM

The possibilities of the piano and string quartet combination engaged the imaginations of many nineteenth century composers, among them Schubert and Schumann, Brahms and Fauré, as well as Dvořák and Franck. The piano quintet medium had the advantage of including two instrumental colours, each capable of harmonic independence.

Piano Quintet in F Minor — César Franck

At the premiere performance of Franck's piano quintet in F Minor (January 17, 1880), the pianist, Camille Saint-Saens, is said to have walked angrily off stage leaving an autographed copy of the score behind. The dramatic intensity of the work was unprecedented -- certainly a world away from Franck's piano trios written 26 years earlier -- and was considered by others as well as by the irate pianist to be improper. Nevertheless, public success was outstanding.

The quintet has three movements unified by a cyclic or recurring theme, by the prominence of the semitone as the initial interval in almost every motive and theme of the quintet and by the consistently chromatic harmony. In the first movement, in sonata-allegro form, the cyclic theme appears in the solo piano as the second subject. Its legato phrasing, sustained notes and pulsing chordal accompaniment contrasts both with the slow introduction where strings and piano alternate and with the bold unison statements of the first allegro theme. In the second movement the same theme is heard briefly before the recurrence of the first section. It reappears again in the coda of the finale where it is heard, very softly, in the first violin, accompanied by sustained strings and harp-like piano arpeggios.

Piano and strings are relatively independent throughout the work. Texturally significant are the many parts for piano alone or piano and one other instrument. In addition, Franck frequently distinguishes thematically between the two timbres, the strings

playing many bold and vigorous unisons or octaves frequently in dotted rhythms, while piano sections are often legato and more lyrical, less angular rhythmically and harmonically denser.

Piano Quintet, Opus 81, A Major — Anton Dvorak

Piano and strings are decidedly more inter-dependent in the Dvorak than in the Franck work. Written in 1887, the Opus 81 quintet may have been prompted by dissatisfaction with an earlier piano quintet (Opus 5, also in A Major, 1872). At any rate, Dvorak's chamber music with piano is quite extensive, including, in addition to the two quintets, four trios, two quartets, an octet ("Serenade") and two violin sonatas.

All four movements of the Opus 81 quintet contain "Slavic" features -- a subtle interplay of major and minor within a single theme, suggestions of modality, and particularly in the last two movements, shifted accents or asymmetrical phrases characteristic of many Slavonic dances.

The first movement, in sonata-allegro form, is dominated by the opening cello theme. The contrast of A Major and A minor is present here, with a turn toward the minor in the last phrase. Recurrences of this theme further exploit the major-minor contrast. The main theme of the second subject group is melodically related to the first. An unusual feature of the recapitulation is the reappearance of this second subject theme in the relative minor (F#-) rather than the tonic key.

One of several "dumky" written by Dvorak (others occurring in the Fourth Piano Trio, Opus 90, called the "Dumky Trio" and piano pieces, Opus 35 and Opus 12), the slow movement embodies the melancholy character and sudden changes in mood which characterize the folk "Dumka" -- a Slavic epic poem or ballad describing heroic deeds, often a lament. In the opening F#- section, a poignant four bar phrase in the high register of the piano frames and separates the phrases of a modal string counter-subject, first heard on the dark C string of the viola. In between the four

varied recurrences of this section there is a lighter and faster D+ section characterized by the rhythmic interplay of four notes against three against two. The central episode -- vivace -- is based melodically upon the opening phrase of the movement.

The subtitle of the scherzo, "Furiant" also indicates a Slavic genre, this time a vigorous dance in triple metre with shifting accents. The tripartite movement, however, is none too typical, shifting accents occurring only in the central "tranquillo" section.

Also imbued with dance spirit is the allegro finale. The main theme of this sonata rondo form has asymmetrical phrases (four and a half measures) with initial accents.

NEXT EVENT: Opera Falstaff (Verdi)
January 24 (sold out)
26, 27 and 29, 1973

NEXT SUNDAY AFTERNOON SERIES:

February 25, 1973
The Creation of the World by Milhaud performed by members of the Staff. Works for solo saxophone performed by Paul Brodie. Angels and Devils by Henry Brant for flute and flute orchestra performed by Robert Aitken.